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15.281 Advanced Managerial Communication
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Cross-Cultural Variables*

In the Culture at Large

- Language
- Use of space
- Perceptions of time
- Meaning of nonverbal behaviors
- Degree of individualism or collectivism
- High context or low context
- Importance of hierarchy
- Use of silence
- Definition of power and leadership
- Definition and rigidity of gender roles
- Attitudes about technology and the environment
- Criteria for success
- Use of humor

In Business and Industry

- Role of written communication (inform? persuade? document? reinforce?)
- Level of informality among co-workers
- Criteria for success (individual and organization)
- Oral presentation styles (relatively formal or informal?)
- Emphasis on task versus relationships
- Goals of business as a cultural institution

In Education

- Purpose of education: to push the frontiers of knowledge? to pass on tradition? to education students in disciplines? to education students in how to be good members of society?
- Relationship between teacher and student: is the teacher a revered figure in the culture? is the teacher the repository of wisdom or a facilitator who guides students?
- Benefit of education: does education confer status or prestige? can it be a detriment for certain members of the culture?
- Behavior of students in the classroom: are students expected to participate actively in the classroom? can students compete with one another? can students challenge the teacher?
- Norms in the classroom: who talks in class? for how long? how do they get the floor?

*These lists are not intended to be all inclusive, but instead to give a sense of potential cultural differences.